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ALMA, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY, AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 11, 1919

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## Grave Reflection is Cast Upon the City of Alma

Propaganda is Being Spread Which is Lowering  
The Reputation of City in All  
Parts of the Country.

ARTICLE AIMED AT SOCIAL WORK HERE

Statements, Claimed to be Untrue, Indicate That Moral  
Conditions in Alma Are Far Worse  
Than the Average.

Under the guise of "Protecting the Public Health," an article has been reprinted from the "Truth Teller" of Battle Creek, November 15 issue, which reflects greatly upon the moral tone of the City of Alma, and has been causing no little discussion among the Alma people who have seen it. It is evidently a part of a propaganda, being circulated for some purpose. It is injuring Alma greatly no matter what the reason. The article follows:

"Protecting the Public Health"  
in Michigan

"Printed from 'TRUTH TELLER',  
Battle Creek, Michigan, November 15,  
1919.

"An unexpected and startling feature of the program at this session was the appearance of Mrs. Elizabeth B. Githens of Alma, Michigan, with a narration of the health board white slavery which has been instituted as the result of the passage of a law last winter in her State appropriating \$300,000 to make a survey and to fight venereal disease."

"The present writer will further state that Mrs. Githens had been for some weeks devoting a large part of her time to get the facts and secure legal aid. She has taken down in shorthand and transcribed the testimony in six cases and has heard the testimony in many others, has collected funds to prosecute the guilty officials, traced out clues and looked after a multitude of details. Those who know, as we do at headquarters, that the same sort of health board villianry is going on in the name of the law, know this is a burning question and that what is being done at Alma, Michigan, is of intense interest to every citizen in the land. Beside the revolting atrocities now being perpetrated wholesale as public health measures, even the tortures of the past in the name of religion seem insignificant."

"The little city of Alma, Michigan, has less than 3,000 population, according to Collier's latest atlas of the world. Yet over one hundred young girls of that community have in the past few months been railroaded to a 'detention home' as venereal cases or suspects. Some of these were not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age. Some of them were not only innocent of any disease, but thoroughly good girls, their only fault poverty and defenselessness. At this 'home' (and may we be forgiven for applying this sacred name to a health-board hell-hole!) these girls were confined, the vicious with the good, for months in some cases, were all made to work hard at menial toil, were fed upon poor food, and so kept that they all became frightfully lousy, at the same time being given no facilities for getting rid of the vermin. Worst of all were the medical examinations and treatment to which they were subjected. Sexual examination and treatment at the hands of three men, of a nature that sent girls out of the treatment room bitterly weeping at the gross indignities to which they had to submit, followed by the ribald laughter of the doctors, was a part of it. So oppressed by the horror of it were some of the girls that suicide was attempted and in one instance a tormented girl died of the poison she swallowed in the hope of escape. This imperfectly and briefly tells 'nurse' in the employ of the health board the story of this detention place. To those who understand the injury to health of the medical treatment administered, there is not a single redeeming feature in the whole affair."

"The method employed to get hold of the girls was as follows: A 'nurse' in the employ of the health board would go to the home of a girl, walk boldly in without the formality of knocking at the door, and demand that the girl accompany her to the city health office. If she or her mother objected she was told that if she refused a sign with large letters would be placed in the window, with the words, 'Venereal Disease Exists in this House,' and those who daily went forth to work would be detained with the rest of the family until the health board demands were complied with. The girl was also told unless she went peacefully, the chief of police would be called and he would forcibly take her to the health office. Rarely did these threats fail of their object. Poor girls, or girls without one or both parents, were usually selected."

"What could they do? What would nine of every ten women do in such circumstances?"  
"And once a girl was in the toils of these medical degenerates, where was her reputation? A stigma was placed on her never to be entirely removed. Those who came back to Alma from the place of detention continued to be hounded by the creature called 'nurse'; she insisted on administering treatment to them and never allowed it to be forgotten or unknown that they had been imprisoned and delinquent."

"At the close of Mrs. Githens' recital, Col. Sol. L. Long arose and addressing her, said, 'Madam, you have

told a terrible story, but I know it is tame in comparison with the actual facts, a good deal of which you have had to suppress.' He declared he had known of such work going on for a long time and held there must be a clean-up of the entire medical ring."

"This heading is supplied by us so the reader may not mistake it for an account of the Middle Ages. 'Edward J. Moore Sons, 101 Beekman Street, New York. 'Additional copies supplied, upon request.'"

It would seem, offhand, that an attempt has been made, possibly a very deliberate one, to give a wrong impression of conditions here in the article. The first statement, which makes a clever crawlout for the author, calling attention as it does to the population ten years ago, making no mention, and giving no room for speculation that Alma has grown from a city of less than 3,000 population according to Collier's latest atlas of the world, to one of nearly three times that size. Thus figures which would be correct for Alma at its present size would be distorted and hopelessly misleading for a "little city of Alma, Michigan" having such a population as ten years ago. There would appear to be no question, but what, if the author knew of the conditions being told of, that the size of Alma today would also be known. That true, it should have been given, if there was to be an attempt at fairness."

Then follows a statement which is entirely wrong, if reports of local officials are to be taken as true, and there is no question but what they are true. This statement is "Yet over one hundred young girls of that community have in the past few months been railroaded to a detention home." Reports secured on the results of the social work in this community reveal the fact that only twenty-five girls have been sent to detention homes for treatment. Two of these were recommended, making twenty-seven cases in all."

The statement that some of these were not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age is regarded as correct, and seemingly shows a need of social workers and such work, that conditions of this kind may be corrected, as they are highly dangerous to a community and to future generations."

That "some of them were not only innocent of any disease, but thoroughly good girls" is a statement in the article that must be open to question, as it is highly doubtful if thoroughly good girls would be in company that would bring them under suspicion of having such diseases."

Neither does it seem probable that the state would be willing to pay for their keep in a detention home if it was not known that there was reason for it."

No knowledge is at hand to allow the telling of the conditions at the detention home, but it is regarded as possible that some of these remarks might be and possibly are almost as wide of the mark as those regarding the size of Alma and the number of girls, who had been sent to the detention homes."

The words "medical degenerates" probably are used to cover doctors here and at the detention home, and knowledge of those here, to Alma people, at least, needs no comment. They are too well known and too highly regarded."

### FIRST ADDRESS

First Sermon in the New Series  
Interesting and Helpful.

Last Sunday evening the first sermon in a new series entitled "The Constitution of a Perfect Social Order" was given in the Presbyterian church. The subject was "Qualifications for Membership."

In his sermon Rev. Gelston pointed out that one of the gifts Christ brought to the world was the perfect law often called "The Constitution of the Kingdom of God." This perfect law is given in the New Testament in Matt. 5, 6, and 7 and it is to that men need now to look as the guide to construct a perfect social order.

In the first paragraph of this law Jesus gives the qualifications men

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must possess who would enter the new order. In so doing he does not lay down definite arbitrary rules men must ever conform to, but he points out that those who enter into the blessing he gives must be in such a state of mind as to be receptive to the truth. They must hunger and thirst for righteousness, must mourn their own lack of spiritual attainment, etc., for then will they be on the lookout and will receive the light of life which he can give. All who are self-satisfied and proud will scarcely care for the truth even when it is clearly stated to them and their consequent practice of that truth is not to be expected."

One great reason, said Rev. Gelston, why many are not eligible to for attaining a more perfect society today than they have, lies in the fact that they do not have the attitude of heart Jesus names. People today do not hunger and thirst for righteousness. They do hunger and thirst, but their craving is for better

wages, more ease, more pleasure and the like. These they are so interested in securing, that even though a more righteous way of living is clearly set forth before them they have no eyes with which to see it, and do not in consequence direct their steps toward it."

Next Sunday evening Dr. Gelston will speak on the second paragraph of this perfect law or "Function of Members."

CAROL SERVICE

A Christmas Carol Service will be given on Thursday evening of next week at eight o'clock to the parents and friends of the pupils of the Alma public schools. The service will be held in the high school auditorium. The pupils have been working on the carols all during the present month. The Carol service will tell in song and story, the birth and boyhood of Jesus to the age of fourteen years.

See Al. St. Johns in "Speed"—Idle-hour, Monday and Tuesday.—adv.

IT'S "The Night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature is stirring—not even a mouse;"  
But Old Santa Claus listens, as common sense bids.  
While he chuckles and whispers—"Some wide-awake kids!"

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## Coal Strike Has Been Brought To a Close

Miners Agreed Yesterday to Return to Work at  
Increase Offered Pending Inquiry As  
To Needed Amount.

MANY FACTORIES FORCED TO SUSPEND

Republic Motor Truck Company Incorporated, Is Operating  
Under Its Own Power and Using Two  
Shifts of Workers.

The coal strike, which has been going on for the past six weeks, with over four hundred thousand miners out, came to an end yesterday, at a time when the industries of the country were facing a condition, because of the coal shortage, that promised shortly to throw hundreds of thousands of men out of employment.

Because of the seriousness of the coal condition over the country, drastic war measures in regard to coal were instituted again this week by the fuel administration, and this was rapidly closing down factories which were dependent upon fuel. The factories affected were those which did not furnish food or have government contracts or were considered vital industries.

CHRISTMAS GOODS  
Alma Stores Offering Best Christmas  
Goods Ever in Stock Here.

The merchants of Alma have gone out of their way this year in the selection and securing of Christmas goods for their patrons, and there is not carrying a larger line of such goods than ever before.

During the past week all of the merchants have been working after store hours to get their goods properly displayed, so that they may be seen, looked at and admired, with the least possible trouble, as they have had in mind the necessity of enabling their patrons to make their selections with the least possible trouble and delay, thus keeping them even-tempered, as well as reducing the extra work of the holiday season to a minimum for their clerks.

One thing is most noticeable this year in the line of Christmas goods and that is, while the assortment is greater than ever, particularly in toys and other articles for the youngsters, there is a noticeable lack of goods labeled, "Made in Germany!" In other words those who purchase Christmas goods this year are practically certain that the goods which are purchased are American made.

It was not until the war made home production of toys, etc., necessary that it was found that America could produce the best toys that the world has seen.

While the merchants are doing everything to make Christmas shopping a matter of far less trouble than ever before they are urging their patrons to shop early, to shop immediately, as it is now only two weeks until Christmas. This will insure less trouble in being waited upon in the stores, will be far less trying for the patrons and for the clerks. Not only that, but it will enable a better selection, as the stocks are hardly touched as yet by the eager hands of the Christmas shoppers, a thing that will not be true another week hence.

"THE MESSIAH"

On Wednesday evening, December 17, "The Messiah" will be given in the Presbyterian church. The chorus will be made up of students from the college and a number of Alma people. The soloists from out of town will be Miss Doolittle, of the Music Depart-

Newspaper offices, railroad stations, hotels, hospitals, telephone, telegraph offices are not included insofar as necessary lighting is concerned.

General and office lights must be cut off not later than 4:00 p. m.

Only enough heat may be used in office, stores, etc., to keep an average temperature of 68 degrees.

Industries dependent upon soft coal must reduce working hours one-half, under the orders, that have been issued, except the vital industries.

Electric signs, etc., are not allowed and neither are ornamental lights, white ways, etc.

The fuel dealers of this city are practically out of coal at the present time and Tuesday evening the city commission instructed Mayor Murphy to ask the fuel administration to release some coal to the local dealers, for the benefit of the Alma people, who are entirely without fuel.

Wednesday the afternoon trains each way, between Grand Rapids and Saginaw were taken off, because of the fuel emergency, and there is no indication that they will be running again within the next few weeks.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of officers for Alma lodge No. 238, I. O. O. F. was held recently with the following being elected: Noble Grand—E. J. Horton. Vice Grand—Fred Delavan. Recording Sec'y—A. R. Schlappi. Financial Secretary—R. J. Rogers. Treasurer—C. J. Falor. Trustee—B. Walker.

Partly worn clothing or other material that will make suits for children is badly needed. Send to or phone Ida B. Peck, city nurse, 319 W. Superior, phone 6-3 rings.—adv.

Buy the best. Buy DeLuxe.—77-1f



WILLIAM WHEELER